

# Time Management - Tools & Tricks

Priorities, jobs, events, interest, church, goals, family . . . all of our world is asking for a piece of our time with an ever increasing speed of change. “Electrons” are bidding for our time in the form of TV, the internet, databases of information, etc... We have a more educated world with more choices, more options, and more possibilities . . . and more confusion and stress.

Recently I worked with an executive in a large Fortune 500 company doing strategic planning with his team. After one session, one of his employees approached me with a comment. She said, “it is funny, Keith (name changed) is one of the brightest people I know, and yet he has so many programs and directions that there is no focus. He sees the value in all of our initiatives, but

seems incapable of picking the right thing to work on”.

With all of this information, “...many men work hard without succeeding and so many men succeed without working hard”. (Albert E.N. Gray).

We now know that you cannot manage time, especially if it is

speeding up. One expert indicates that 15 years of change in today’s world is equal to a 1000 years of change, based on mankind of 200 years ago.

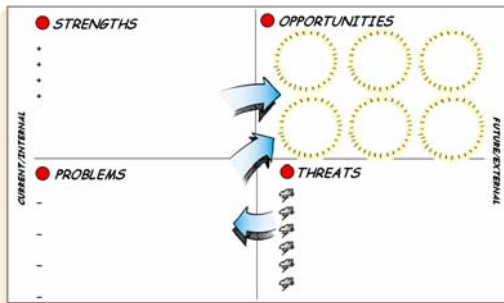
Enter a new “old” tool. The SPOT matrix (Strengths/Problems/Opportunities/Threats). Long used in organizations for assessing current and future directions of the organization, we can now use this tool by combining it with new Time Management Matrices insights.

Start by creating a four part table and labeling the axis’s with what is (and is not) **urgent** and **important**.

**By overlaying these two models together, you find you have a powerful organizer and tool to help you focus on the most important things first.**

## Here is how it works.

Write each item on your traditional “to do” list on a post it note or 3 x 5 card. Then by asking your self a series of questions, place each “to do” in the proper quadrant of a SPOT matrix (a large desktop or surface).



### Quadrant 1 Questions (upper left)

*Pressing, stress, work, tasks, deadlines . . . these are the words that often go with the “to do’s” in this quadrant.*

- Is this a deadline driven issue? Is it both urgent and important?
- Is it pressing?
- Will bad things happen if I don’t address this right away?
- Is this a task that someone gave me because of my particular talent or skills?

### Quadrant 2 Questions (upper right)

*This quadrant is all about opportunities and possibilities . . . often with long term plans and time involved.*

- These will determine huge success?
- Relationships are involved
- Planning for future steps are needed and carried out here
- Preventative steps are sometimes involved

### Quadrant 3 Questions (lower left)

*Items that make their way here are urgent requests on you, which probably need to be assigned elsewhere or just dropped altogether.*

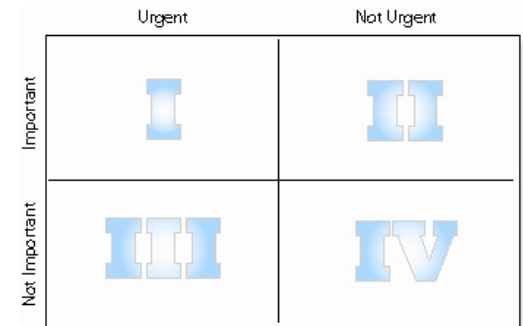
*Since they match to your weaknesses, can you really do yourself justice by doing these “to dos”?*

- Popular Activities
- Some meetings, some mail, some messages, some reports
- These are things that press on you now, but if you were geographically removed. . . they would not be important
- General Interruptions

### Quadrant 4 Questions (lower right)

*Trivia, non-important, non-urgent. These are the time wasters that fill our lives. Sometimes we have huge attraction to these . . . but they are still not productive.*

- Is this phone call/meeting/activity really important to my long term success?



**For the greatest success, focus on Quadrant II (Opportunities) . . .and Quadrant I (Strengths)**

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